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FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2716
INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0016
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0005
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0012
RHMFISS/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC

UNCLAS TORONTO 000006

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [XF](#) [IS](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [GZ](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: Ontario Union Call For Ban on Israeli Professors; Canadian Jewish Congress Immediately Responds.

¶1. (U) Summary: The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in Ontario announced on January 6 that it would propose a ban on Israeli academics speaking, teaching, or researching at Ontario universities. The proposal is in response to the December 29 Israeli bombing that damaged the Islamic University in Gaza. Canadian Jewish groups immediately condemned the resolution for being unfair and unbalanced. End Summary.

¶2. (U) CUPE, the province's largest university workers union, announced that its University Workers Coordinating Committee will try to prohibit Israeli academics from speaking, teaching, or researching at Ontario universities. CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan proclaimed that Israeli academics should not be working in Ontario universities unless they explicitly condemn the bombing of the Islamic University in Gaza and the assault on Gaza in general. The resolution is still being drafted for consideration at the Committee's annual meeting on February 19. If it passes the Committee, it would be on the agenda at CUPE Ontario's conference in May. Should it pass that point, the union would then ask the province's schools to respect the prohibition.

¶3. (SBU) Canadian Jewish groups such as the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and Hillel student organizations immediately condemned the proposal. The Ontario branch of the CJC called the resolution "unbalanced, unfair, and unhelpful." A well-known non-Jewish human rights activist who has worked with many ethnic groups told us privately that he also considered the resolution to be ridiculous and unfair. If one is going to oppose blaming all Palestinians collectively for the actions of Hamas, he said, one must also oppose blaming all Israeli academics for the actions of their government. He doubted that the resolution would go anywhere.

¶4. (U) Comment: The proposed ban on Israeli academics is the latest in recent events showing how the Israeli offensive in Gaza has raised emotions in Toronto - Canada's most diverse city and home both to Canada's largest Muslim community and also its largest and most influential Jewish community. In the last two weeks, two demonstrations against Israel's actions have been held in Toronto with protestors marching from the Israeli Consulate to the U.S. Consulate. The most recent protest, on January 3, saw as many as 3,000 demonstrators gather peaceably in front of our Consulate. The Jewish community, meanwhile, also is organizing events here to demonstrate support of Israel. The resolution itself seems likely to be dropped as a bad idea (and it likely would be OBE before it comes to a vote in any case), but vocal and biased comments and more Toronto demonstrations can be expected throughout the operation. End Comment.

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